



Commonwealth Connections: Discussing Starr's tremendous influence on Starr Detroit Academy

Starr Detroit Academy is extremely fortunate to partner with Starr Commonwealth in its efforts to prepare students for academic mastery, college, work and life.

Commonwealth Connections, a new section of the Academy's newsletter, will focus on how Starr Commonwealth impacts communities around the world and how that expertise is being brought to Starr Detroit Academy.

For 100 years, Starr Commonwealth has offered programming to children, families and communities across Michigan, the U.S. and around the globe. While these services reach a wide range of individuals, they are all built on the same foundational belief: There's no such thing as a bad child. That belief is evident in all of Starr's programs, including our school.

We believe it is unacceptable that only 60 percent of children in Detroit graduate from high school. We believe all children deserve high-quality educational opportunities. We believe that in an environment of love, respect and hard work, all children can reach their potential. We believe that with a rigorous curriculum, enrichment opportunities and the help of parents and caregivers, our children can accomplish anything.

Our first feature discusses the Circle of Courage, a model of positive youth development pioneered by Starr and practiced throughout all of Starr's programs.

The Circle of Courage, which was created by Dr. Larry Brendtro -- the second president of Starr Commonwealth -- and two of his colleagues from Augustana College in South Dakota, identifies the four universal needs for all healthy children as: Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity.

Children need to feel like they belong, which is why Starr Detroit Academy stresses a sense of community and respect. The Academy is also committed to helping our students achieve academic mastery, while learning to function independently and give back to the community. All Academy staff have been or will be trained in the Circle of Courage model, as well as other trainings from Starr.

The Academy is honored to work with Starr Commonwealth, and we hope you enjoy learning more about how Starr's century of experience guides our work.

Meet Our Staff: Kimberley Pressley



School administrators play a vital role in education, one where they must work with several different groups.

Assistant Principal Kimberley Pressley, who has begun her first year at Starr Detroit Academy, believes her position allows her to have a unique impact on the educational experience.

"As an assistant principal, I am able to impact all stakeholders involved in education," Pressley said. "I feel very strongly about helping our children become successful in life through education. By working with fellow administrators, teachers, parents and our school board, we can make sure our students have the opportunity to thrive."

Through a variety of roles held during her career, Pressley has engaged with students, faculty members and other groups. She has taught grades 2-6 in charter schools, most recently serving as assistant principal and dean with National Heritage Academies. At NHA, she held several positions during her eight-year tenure, including instructional coach, reading specialist, literacy coordinator and dean.

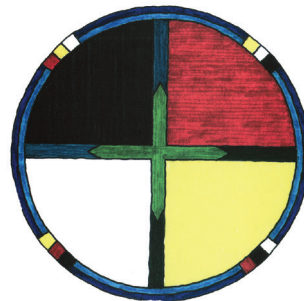
Pressley earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Wayne State University before graduating from Walden University with a master's degree in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. She also holds an Administrator Certification from Grand Valley State University.

She joined Starr Detroit Academy to help continue the school's immense impact on education in Detroit.

"I was impressed with Starr's vision for students," Pressley said. "It covers all aspects of the student's life, in school and out. That's really important."

Pressley also shares Starr's belief in the idea that all children have strengths.

"I hope to help create a school of high-performing students, regardless of life situations and circumstances," Pressley said. "I want our children to know they have potential within themselves."



The Circle of Courage represents the four universal needs of all children: Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity.

Newsletter

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Starr Detroit Academy is dedicated to the mission of preparing kids for academic mastery, college, work and life.

Upcoming Events

MEAP Testing

Location: Starr Detroit Academy
19360 Harper Ave.

Date & Time: Oct. 8 - 18

Picture Day

Location: Starr Detroit Academy
19360 Harper Ave.

Date & Time: Thursday, Oct. 17

After-School Enrichment

Location: Starr Detroit Academy
19360 Harper Ave.

Date & Time: Begins Monday, Oct. 21



"Like" us on Facebook at Starr Detroit Academy

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Thank you to parents for supporting Starr Commonwealth

Starr Commonwealth, which serves as Starr Detroit Academy's partner organization, held a wonderful celebration Sunday, Oct. 6, commemorating 100 years of serving children and families. Thank you to all of the Academy parents and staff who showed their support of Starr by coming out to the event. Students from the school performed a song with Starr's All Starr Choir, a group of talented singers who take part in various Starr programs. The choir was accompanied by Michigan's own Matt Giraud, a former "American Idol" contestant. Thanks again for showing your Starr pride!

Parents can help ensure student success

At Starr Detroit Academy, we believe a strong partnership between parents and school staff is essential to long-term student success.

There are many ways parents and caregivers can have a positive impact on their child's academic experience.

"Parents are the biggest ally the school has in helping our students reach their potential," said School Director Jeremy Vidito. "Through their support of school events, the act of helping their children with homework, or promoting the importance of a good education, parents make a huge difference with respect to their children's academic performance."

Some ways parents can make a difference in their children's lives include helping with homework and continuing learning outside of the classroom. Supporting students with good habits in school and studying, nutrition and a positive attitude can go a long way to helping students reach their potential.

Free online learning opportunities for Academy students

In an effort to continue learning while at home, Starr Detroit Academy is making parents aware of several free online learning opportunities for students.

These activities include games and worksheets that help students with math, science, reading, critical thinking and more.

We hope you will work with your child to extend the Academy's passion for learning into your home.

Free websites include:

- ST Math (www.stmath.com)
- Enter code: STA3PW-HVL-LF-WD7
- PBS Kids (www.pbskids.com)
- ABCYA (www.abcya.com)
- CoolMath (www.coolmath.com)

For more ideas on how you can help your child continue his or her learning beyond the classroom, contact Starr Detroit Academy.

